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African and African American Studies Program Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 1

Spring Quarter 2006

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DIRECTOR'S WORDS:

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I want to thank everyone who participated in our Visiting Scholar's Program during this past fall quarter. Professor Roger Wilkins of George Mason University was featured as this year's Visiting Scholar. The event was, by all accounts, a huge success. I want to say special thanks to Ms. Alyce Jenkins for the magnificent work she did in planning our two Community Conversations. I also want to thank Dr. Jeanne Ballantine, Dr. Mary Rucker, and Mr. William Gillispie.

Jeanne served as moderator for Professor Wilkins' lectures. She also joined Mary Rucker and William Gillispie and served on the Scholarship committee. Special thanks go to Ms. Ife Shafeek and Mr. Victor Davis for their work with the event. Finally, thanks goes to Nancy Buckheister for her secretarial work. This year's Visiting Scholar's program threw down a major challenge for next year's. With your continuing support, I am confident that we will rise to this occasion.

Scholarship

AFS launched its annual scholarship program this past fall. I want to congratulate this year's recipients—TeLisa Harrison, Matthew Martin, Teisha Murray, and Nadav Zohar. AFS also presented the Allen Jones Memorial Scholarship, a university-wide rotating scholarship.

AFS Spring Quarter Courses

African and African American Studies Program

Wright State University
144 Millett Hall
(937) 775-5532

A minor brings beginning
knowledge

A major offers greater un-
derstanding

Choose one TODAY



Mary McLeod-Bethune



Malcolm X



Zora Neale Hurston



W.E.B. Dubois



Barbara Jordan



Martin Luther King

Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate; only love
can do that. Hate

multiplies hate, violence multiplies
violence, and toughness

multiplies toughness in a descending
spiral of destruction....The chain reac-
tion of evil-hate begetting hate, wars
producing more wars-must be broken,
or we shall

be plunged into the dark abyss of
annihilation."

Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength To
Love, 1963.

AFS 200-01 What is the African and African American Experience T,TH (12:20 - 2:00) 302 Oelman Hall- Baker

A historical and methodological analysis of the Diaspora struggles of persons of African descent to create a life and distinct culture among world civilizations.

AFS 499-01 Idea of Race/Racism, 1950-Present T, TH (2:15-3:55) 248 Oelman -Griffin

This course studies how the ideas of race and racism that shaped America's racial thoughts and practices from the Colonial era through the 1950s continue to mold the ways in which America views and treats its black citizens today. The course gives special focus to how the old ideas of race not only remain a powerful influence on the racial thoughts and practices of many present day conservatives, but also how they continue to shape the racialism of some contemporary liberal white males and females.

AFS 499-02 Towards an African American Origin Story T,TH (4:10-5:50) 236 Oelman Hall - Seon

This course invites students to review the scientific evidence for human origins in Africa, discuss the debate among Egyptologists regarding the origins of Egyptian civilization, research cultural practices from thousands of years before the Common Era that still appear today and appraise certain African nation states that pre-date the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

COM 102 Essentials of Interpersonal Communication various days, various times

Introduction to intrapersonal and interpersonal communication processes as they affect communication style and competence. Emphasis on a holistic approach to communication by understanding concepts, analyzing experiences, and practicing new skills.

COM 457/657 Intercultural Communication T, TH (12:20 -2:00) 286 Millett Hall - Rucker

Study of communication in intercultural environments. Emphasis on research and theory to better understand the complexity of intercultural communication interactions.

ENG 205-01 Afro- American Literature M, W, F (1:30 -2:35) 401 Millett Hall - Jones

Readings in African American literature. Titles vary.

ENG 440-01 African American Women Writers M,W,F (11:00-12:05) 302 Oelman Hall-Jones

Intensive study of literature from the perspectives of gender theory. Intended to develop an understanding of gender and sexuality as important both to literature and to its critical appreciation. PREREQUISITE: ENG 255/256 OR ENG 251; AT LEAST ONE OF THE ENG 350-359 SEQUENCE.

AFS Spring Quarter Courses (Cont.)

HST 475-01 Reconstruction M (4:10-7:40) 341 Oelman Hall- Green

Examination of distinct periods in the 19th century including the Civil War and Reconstruction, and major topics such as slavery.

HST 490-01 The Civil Rights Movement M,W,F (12:15-1:20) 341 Oelman Hall- Green

Examines topics drawing from the African-American experience. This course may also include black ideology, leadership and racial tension in urban society.

MUS 290-01 African American Music: America and Beyond T,TH (10:25-12:05) M146 Creative Arts Center- Ellis

This course surveys the development of African American music from a historical, sociological and cultural perspective. Included will be an analysis of the genres, influences and impact on American and world culture.

PLS 399-02 Black Women, Community and Activism W (6:05-9:25) 140 Health Sciences- Hairston

PLS 408-01 Black Radical Thought T,TH (4:10-5:50) 286 Millett Hall-Snipe

This course examines radical black thought and philosophy from a Pan-Africanist perspective. Focusing primarily on the 20th century.

Rel 330 01 Idea of Race/Racism, 1950-Present T, TH (2:15 - 3:55) 248 Oelman Hall - Griffin

This course studies how the ideas of race and racism that shaped America's racial thoughts and practices from the Colonial era through the 1950s continue to mold the ways in which America views and treats its black citizens today. The course gives special focus to how the old ideas of race not only remain a powerful influence on the racial thoughts and practices of many present day conservatives, but also how they continue to shape the racialism of some contemporary liberal white males and females.

RST 271 Regional Studies: Africa 01 T (6:05-9:25) 301 Millett Hall - Snipe; 02 T,TH (4:10 - 5:50) 302 Oelman - Eguaroje; 03 T,TH (10:25-12:05) 236 Oelman- Kannan ; 04 T (6:05-9:25) 303 Oelman Hall—Eguaroje ; 05 M,W (6:05-7:45) 495 Millett Hall—Ninon

Introduction to African environment; diversity of cultural heritages; changes due to modernization; colonialism, slavery, and independence; a brief survey of the relations of Africa to other non-western regions; and the contribution of Africa to world civilization. Writing Intensive.

SOC 341 Social Inequality T,TH (4:10-5:50) 144 RC -Shepelak

Examines structures, theories and consequences of social inequality with special emphasis on the United States.

SOC 442 Race & Minority Relations M,W (4:10-5:50) 210 Fawcett Hall - Bergdahl

Study of intergroup, racial, and ethnic group relations including the processes and consequences of conflict, prejudice, and discrimination. Note: Open to Juniors and Seniors only. Prerequisite: SOC 200 or 201.

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be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength To Love, 1963.

FACULTY REFLECTIONS

African American Students' Direct and Indirect Communication Style

By: Mary L. Rucker, Ph.D.

Department of Communication

This is part of an article I will present at the Southern States Communication Association that is in Dallas, Texas, in April 2006. Since little work has been done on African American students' communication style, I thought I would share part of this research with my colleagues and students.

What people value about themselves is not only an important aspect of their definition of self, it also has a direct effect on their behavior (Jackson, 2004). This implies that what African Americans value about themselves, in relation to race and how they believe they should relate to others, will have a varying impact on their communication styles.

The behavioral consequences of the independent and interdependent self-construals are grounded in Hall's (1976) delineation of low and high context communication styles respectively. According to Hall, low context communication promotes individualistic tasks and goals through direct verbal messages. A direct communication style includes "telling it like it is," whether it is to express needs, wants, or desires. It highlights the desirable qualities of honesty, openness, individualism, and forthrightness (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Martin & Nakayama, 2000). Direct communication is the preferred style of many English speakers in the United States and European nations.

Direct communication is associated with individualistic cultures and independent self-construals (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2002).

In contrast to low context communication, high context communication emphasizes indirectness (Hall, 1976). This indirect style of communication serves to preserve harmonious group relationships through implicit communication. The majority of meaning and information is embedded in nonverbal codes (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Martin & Nakayama, 2000). Indirect communication is associated with collectivistic cultures and interdependent self-construals (Gudykunst et al., 1996).

With reference to African Americans, direct communication is enacted both individually and jointly for conversation purposes (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1984, 1993). Hecht, Collier, and Ribeau go on to say that direct communication for African Americans is conceptualized as asserting one's point of view, presenting one's self positively, being open and friendly, expressing genuineness, confronting situations directly, directly informing and educating, and treating people as individuals and equal to others. For example, Hecht, Ribeau, and Alberts (1989) contend that in order to assert one's point of view, African Americans believe that individuals should strongly argue their position and convince the other person to accept their position.

For African Americans, being open and friendly means individuals should "consider other people's ideas or opinions rather than dismissing them without sufficient deliberation" (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993, p. 129). On the other hand, African Americans conceptualize indirect communication, for example, as avoiding the situation or

confronting it indirectly by controlling one's thoughts or feelings about the situation (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1984, 1993).

In conclusion, what began a few decades ago as an effort to uncover and eliminate harmful stereotypes about African Americans' communication style has now evolved into a scholarly discussion about every kind of difference with respect to their worldview and everyday experiences based on their cultural values.

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Faculty Reflections (Cont.)

African and African American Studies: What It Is

By Dr. Yvonne Seon
Distinguished Director,
Bolinga Black Cultural
Resources Center

African and African American Studies is the interdisciplinary analysis of the cultures of Africa and the global African Diaspora, with emphasis on the Americas. In these diverse cultures, issues of African identity are generally problematic. Suppression of African cultural styles during slavery, physical separation from Africa and denigration of African people and their styles based on racial prejudices have led to this result. AFS uses the

rigors of academic discipline and appropriate methods from a variety of disciplines to address these issues.

In some colleges and universities where African and African American studies are taught, African Studies is a separate field from African American Studies. Yet, as Professor Asa Hilliard points out on the very first page of his work, *The Maroon Within Us*, "People of African descent in the United States can only be understood when both the African cultural and Western hemispheric political realities are taken into account together." The AFS program at Wright State University is built on the premise of this interrelatedness.

A challenge for African and African American Studies everywhere, whether

Studies everywhere, whether the two areas are considered separately or together, is that, with few exceptions, this field is a program within another department or simply a smattering of courses taught in various departments. Yet, in common with other academic fields, AFS has its own unique objectives, methodology, vocabulary and literature. Temple University in Philadelphia, City University of New York, Harvard and Princeton are among the universities that are leading the way by having their courses as part of a unified program within a department focused on African and African American Studies--by whatever name the department is called.

Today, insights

from archaeology and from the latest DNA technology suggest that all humans originated on the continent of Africa. Cave drawings and other anthropological evidence suggests that ancient African cultural forms have survived and traveled throughout the world, sometimes transformed. Thus, in a way many would not have imagined at the turn of the millennium, we are, indeed, all African people.

Student Reflections

The Chile Experience

By Brenda Adams



During this past fall quarter break, I was fortunate to be able to travel to Chile through Wright State University's Ambassador Program. This was a richly rewarding experience. It gave me the chance to participate in another culture, which in turn afforded me the opportunity to utilize Spanish, my second language.

In order to participate in the Ambassador's Program one must complete several steps. First, one must apply. The application

process begins at the University Center for International Education. After the application and fee have been turned in and reviewed, one must wait for correspondence from the director of the department. A few days later an interview takes place. After acceptance, a conference will be conducted to discuss social norms and basic information about the country. Some of these topics include information regarding weather, food, style of dress, greeting and departing customs, transportation, and other necessary information to live day to day in the specific country.

The trip to Chile was absolutely fantastic. For two weeks, I lived as a college student in two

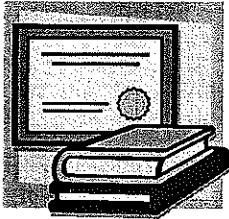
different cities. The first city was Concepcion and the second was Santiago. In Concepcion, I lived with a guide who attended the University of Concepcion. I studied economics and language at this university. My group also did quite a bit of touring. This gave us the opportunity to see many historical sites and natural landmarks. In Santiago, I lived in a dorm with students from other Latin American countries who were attending various universities in the area. Here I participated in another economics class at the University of Desarrollo along with more sight seeing.

I found the Chilean culture, in many ways, very different from American culture.

The Chilean people were the most hospitable that I have ever met. They were very loving people and made me feel right at home. Although I learned much about the culture of Chile from my studies at their universities, I learned the most through my every day contact with the Chilean people. I am most thankful that Wright State University's Ambassador Program afforded me the opportunity to travel to Chile and enrich my mind and soul.

Study Reflections (Cont.)

Reflections from Scholarship Recipients



Last fall quarter the African and African American Studies program awarded me a scholarship for my academic achievement. Although I am a third generation college student, my family's economic status has only improved slightly, the result of which is my constant search for scholarships and grants. To receive a scholarship from the AFS program here on campus meant more to me than just a lessened financial struggle. With the award came the knowledge that as a student and AFS minor I am supported and my success is encouraged. However, such a sentiment is not reserved for me only; the professional academic community on campus is ready and willing to help the next generation. We just have to take the first step.

—Teisha T. Murray

After learning that there were scholarships available for students majoring and minoring in African American Studies, I felt a sense of care from the AFS program. I felt the program really cared about the students getting ahead in life, so much that they were willing to aid them financially in doing so. After receiving the scholarship, I was motivated to continue my education not only here at Wright State University within the African American Studies Program, but outside of Wright State and the AFS program as well.

Prior to attending Wright State University, I gave little attention to the history of African Americans. The subject was of no interest to me, and I was not concerned about hearing what people had to say regarding the topic. That was until I met Dr. Frank Dobson and Dr. Paul Griffin. After taking AFS 200 with Dr. Dobson, AFS 499 with Dr. Griffin, and being encouraged to minor in African American Studies, I came to realize the importance of learning about my fellow African Americans. I came to understand that racism still exists today. It simply has just changed faces. I have also learned that American racism persists because of the ideas that were sown during the colonial years. This is a fact to which I was blind. I must now express my gratitude to all the professors and others who have encouraged me to learn more about my heritage. I especially thank Dr. Paul Griffin, Director of African and African American Studies.

— TeLisa L. Harrison

I became interested in African American studies when I was in high school. It was a one in a thousand shot that I was able to name and pursue that which truly interests me at a university where I feel I belong. Wright State University's African and African American Studies Program continues to fuel my interest and has motivated me to the scholastic performance that allowed me to be able to apply and receive the African and African American Studies scholarship. I feel very lucky to have the support and encouragement of the African and African Studies Program and I look forward to continuing and completing my minor in African American Studies.

—Nadav Zohar

Being awarded the Allen Jones Memorial Scholarship was a vote of confidence to me and is a tremendous encouragement for me to continue striving to reach my goals. By being selected as the recipient of this scholarship, the African and African American Studies scholarship committee demonstrated its faith in my abilities, which is motivation for me to rise to meet the challenge of future obstacles I may encounter in the remainder of my academic career and beyond.

--Ms. Ife Shafeek

"Having grown up in a small town where racism is the rule, it has been incredible to see the transformation wrought in me during my time in college. It has been a pleasure to have not only taken classes in the African and African American Studies Program, but to also minor in the program has been very rewarding. This has helped me to build friendships with my professors and fellow students. I'm grateful for the way Dr. Griffin and others in the African and African American Studies program have pushed and encouraged me these past couple years. It was this encouragement that motivated me to apply for the scholarship. I was honored to have been awarded the AFS scholarship. Not only was I thankful to receive a scholarship, but to have Dr. Roger Wilkins at the ceremony was a real treat as well. His wisdom and sincerity were very encouraging, as were all the admonishments from Dr. Mary Rucker and Dr. Griffin to continue learning and working hard. I enjoyed spending time with my fellow recipients at the ceremony, as it was very apparent that I was among not only some of the most accomplished students, but some of the best people as well. However, probably the most rewarding aspect of the event was that my father was able to come and meet some of my professors and enjoy my accomplishment. He and my mother have worked really hard over the years to help my brother, sister, and me succeed, and to be able to show him how much I have appreciated it was very gratifying."

--Matt Martin

Schedule of Events - Paul Laurence Dunbar Commemoration and Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center 35th Anniversary



A community collaboration to honor the life
and works of Paul Laurence Dunbar

January 2006

Paul Laurence Dunbar Exhibitions

A year-long exhibition of the life and works of Paul Laurence Dunbar featuring two- and three-dimensional objects, sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society's National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center. Call (937) 376-4944, ext. 115 or 120.

Display of first editions of Dunbar books, Wright State University's Dunbar Library. **Free**

February 2006

Feb. 1-28: Paul Laurence Dunbar: Common Ground

This operatic theatre work uses Dunbar's poetry to explore the many areas of human existence which are common to us all. Contact Pam Eyink at 937-228-0662, Ext. 3091 or at pey-ink@daytonopera.org for available dates and cost

Feb. 1-28: "In Praise of Dunbar: The Man, The Dream, The Voice" Art Exhibit - a group exhibition, coordinated and curated by internationally known educator and artist Willis "Bing" Davis, Schuster Center lobby. **Free**

Feb. 8: All-day celebration featuring song, poetry readings and faculty presentations in Robson Auditorium at Central State University. Special focus on comparing the work of Dunbar with poet and author Hallie Q. Brown. **Free** Call 937-376-6007

Feb. 17: World renowned poet Nikki Giovanni will speak at the Victoria Theatre at 8 p.m. Co-sponsored by the University of Dayton's Diversity Lecture Series and English department. Tickets are \$18 and \$12. Call 937-228-3630

Feb. 23: Nationally recognized poet Michael S. Harper will deliver a keynote reading from 7-9 p.m. in the Frederick C. Smith Auditorium in Building 12 at Sinclair Community College. **Free**

Feb. 25-26: DCDC's "In the Spirit of..." will include the poetry of Dunbar. This performance is a collaboration between DCDC and a mass community choir under the direction of Mrs. Euna Thompson. Location: Masonic Temple

March 2006

Mar. 25: "Paul Laurence Dunbar: The Eyes of the Poet" Herbert Woodward Martin 1 p.m. performance at the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center. Sponsored by the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. **Free** Call 937-225-7705

June 2006

Jun. 25: Annual Wright-Dunbar Market Days Festival, a family-oriented community festival celebrating the life and accomplishments of Paul Laurence Dunbar in the Wright-Dunbar Business Village. Sponsored by Wright-Dunbar, Inc. Call 937-443-0249

Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center Upcoming Events



Winter Quarter 2006

Play: James Baldwin: Down from the Mountaintop

(Featuring Calvin Levels, playwright & actor)

February 6 - 6 p.m. —Apollo Room

Film Series: Hotel Rwanda

February 13 - 11 a.m., 2p.m., 6p.m.—Millett Hall Atrium

Black Arts Festival

February 16 - 10 a.m. -9:30 p.m. —Apollo Room, E163

Film Series: Sankofa

February 20 - 11 a.m., 2p.m., 6p.m.—Millett Hall Atrium

Authentic African Hour

February 23 - Noon — Multicultural Lounge 161 Millett Hall

Film Series: Daughters of the Dust

(Featuring a Q&A with actress, Barbara O)

February 27 - 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m. —Apollo Room

Lecture: Africa and the Trafficking of Women and Children

March 6 - 5 p.m. —Apollo Room

Spring Quarter

Donna Brazile Lecture

March 27

Bolinga Student Leadership Institute

March 32, April 7, April 21, April 28, May 5, May 12

Samuel Yette Lecture

April 4

Bolinga Awards and Recognition Ceremony

May 24

For additional information, contact: the Bolinga Center at 775-5645



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